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In The Nation

Senator Dodd, the Outcast of Potomac Flat

By ARTHUR KROCK

WASHINGTON, Nov. 7—When a United States Senator attacks the leadership of both party groups in this branch of Congress, he compounds the heinous offense of criticizing his own. This was disclosed today when Democrats and Republicans united in rebuking Senator Dodd of Connecticut. "He is out of order," pronounced Senator Fulbright in the portentous tone appropriate to this fearsome charge. "Even Morse," cried an anguished member of the sacred college—referring to the senior Senator from Oregon—"wouldn't do such a thing!"

The implication of this is unfair to the Oregon Senator, who often has demonstrated that he is undaunted by any taboo of "the Club" that restrains others from challenging it. But to "even Morse," whose war of moment is with the majority and minority chieftains over amendments to the foreign aid bill, defended the former from the Connecticut Senator's criticism that Mansfield does not "lead the Senate as it should be led."

Dodd's bipartisan attribution of lack of leadership vigor, and the castigation heaped upon him for this double breach of the Senate's most respected and of etiquette, were recorded in extracts from the Congressional Record that follow.

Last night, after being informed by the Republican deputy commander, Senator Kuchel of California, that the majority leadership felt the Senate had done enough work on the day on the foreign aid bill, Dodd protested the decision.

"Job," he exclaimed, "is not a moon to 5 P.M. job . . . We ought to get here early and stay."

With empathy flowing from every pore, Senator Humphrey, second in command on the majority side, said he "well understood" Dodd's position and almost brought the Senate to tears by adding: "I should like to say, with a note of sadness, that for the past year I have planned to spend this weekend with my 15-year-old son. . . ."

He got no further. "That is enough," cried Senator Dodd. "The Senator need say no more. My dear friend, whom I admire so much—and he knows I do—need tell me no more." But, as it quickly developed, this indication that the matter would be dropped applied only to Humphrey. Soon afterward the Connecticut Senator was addressing his colleagues in part as follows:

"I worry about his [Mansfield's] leadership. . . . If we are to accomplish the business of the Senate he must behave like a leader. . . . He must say 'No' at times. He must say 'Yes' at times. . . . One cannot be a leader and be every man's leader. . . . Let us sit Saturdays. Let us sit nights. . . . No wonder the Senate has been denigrated. . . . I believe we should have leadership. And until we have, we shall go on dribbling our way through the legislative session."

Too Much Territory

That was certain to provoke a reply from Mansfield today (he was not around when these things were said). But three reasons made it certain that the majority leader's retort would be mild. One, this is his way of handling minor disturbances. Two, he knows that the size and controversial nature of the President's proposals, and the rules of the Senate, are the basic causes of the slow Senate pace. Three, he knows that the Senate as a whole knows this, too.

But then Dodd recklessly branched out from rolling his own wagon-train into stirring up Indian controversy. "I worry about the opposition [the Republicans]," he continued. "[It] has become so complacent, so soft it doesn't make any sense. . . . so cozy that it doesn't count for much. . . . We, Democrats, are the only opposition to ourselves."

When that shot hit Minority Leader Dirksen, who had been scuffling peacefully ahead for Mansfield's wagon-train, he loosed a rain of arrows at Dodd, among them: "The Senator from the Nutmeg State, on a white charger," is using the night-time Senate "as a glorified walling wall. . . . You're not around enough. . . . He isn't here now, and if he doesn't know the Senate is in session . . . I'll suggest the absence of a quorum and see if he can find his way . . . perhaps with a seeing-eye dog." Dodd could be in the Senate "to hear more" of what goes on.

Thus, by firing at both the Republicans and his own party leadership, Dodd became the outcast of Potomac Flat, sentenced to a wilderness trail alone.